

CHAL-0288

Copy 2 of 9

7 August 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant to the Director
for Planning and Development

SUBJECT : Aircraft Losses in Training

1. The recent spate of accidents in the SAC U-2 Program, plus remembrance of similar losses in the early stages of our own activities, leads me to suggest that whatever form a successor vehicle to the U-2 takes, be it subsonic, supersonic or what have you, we should give serious thought to the investment of money in at least one two-seater version thereof.

2. I would argue that such an investment would more than pay for itself in reducing the number of crashes that inevitably occur when pilots are introduced for the first time to a strange, high-performance vehicle. You will note that the Air Force has engineered two-seater versions of the F-104, F-105 and F-106, to name only a few recent models. Such an aircraft need not be totally lost to operational use either, though its performance may not be completely identical to its single-seater brothers, and its capability to carry some configurations may be drastically affected.

3. I also realize that with aircraft costing what they do today, the possibility that one may have to be built with the primary mission of training may not appeal to the purchaser on the surface, but the day of handing a pilot a flight manual on a new plane and then letting him take to the air solo without ever having experienced landing attitudes, stalls and spins is gone with the biplane. Even if the net result is to save one pilot and one operational vehicle from disaster, the cost of the trainer is amortized and a greater operational capability is assured.

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Director of Administration
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